

## MVMS Parent Council 2021-2022

### Meeting Minutes 5 – January 14, 2022

- Principal Toth
- Chair and 8<sup>th</sup> grade: Kelly Gillard
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade: Julie Maurer
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade: *Tiffany Jurist Baus*
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade: *Tricia Gay*
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Marie Simonsen
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Vidoushi Curtil
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade: *Sarah Quinn Clausen*
- Co-chair and 5<sup>th</sup> grade: Aparna Largman

#### Discussion Topics:

- I. Welcome and Principal's Updates
- II. Other

#### Welcome and Principal's Updates–

- Happy New Year!!
- Winter Sports
  - It's back! We have three games left for the boys' team and two for the girls' team.  
**Note: These remaining games will not be open to spectators.**
  - There is an upcoming tournament being held by the Greater Morris County Junior Athletics Committee and it likely will be open to spectators. The tournament is anticipated to start around January 26 and the games are typically held in Wharton. The coaches will share information as it becomes available.
  - Mrs. Toth will include sports information in the Weekly Update.
- Winter Enrichment Opportunities via the HSA
  - HSA emailed it out today and Mrs. Toth will also socialize the information in the Weekly Update.
  - Chess Club and Field Hockey Feb-Mar
- Town Hall Meetings with Students
  - Usually at the halfway point of the year/end of 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period, we have grade-level Town Hall meetings with the students. We talk about EOY goals, teacher feedback, policies, etc.
  - We've held the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade sessions already; 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades to follow.
  - Something being shared with all of the students is how we will repurpose EEE to help students prepare for the NJSLA.

- Some of our students have had a gap since they last took the NJSLA and our 5<sup>th</sup> graders have never taken it at all.
- By “prepare” we do not mean teaching (content) to the test; **rather, we want to familiarize our students with how to navigate through the format and style of the test’s online platform** - marking a question to go back to it later, using the voice feature, how to highlight, how to handle math questions with multiple parts, etc.
- Preparation will also include taking some practice tests, which in grades 5 and 8 include science.
  - Science is the area in which we will likely include some level of content preparation because the science assessment is cumulative, and the topics seem to have changed every year.
- Mr. Ward prepared an introductory presentation for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade on what the test is, and the students were intrigued by the format.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Collaboration with the High School
  - Over the past two weeks, we have been participating in Articulation Meetings with the HS Administration and teachers.
    - Pre-pandemic, the meetings were in-person, and we were able to go and observe the classrooms. This helps us better understand how our students are doing in 9<sup>th</sup> grade relative to the recommendations we made on their behalf.
    - The meetings help the HS understand what was emphasized in our curriculum and they help us understand the skills we need to reinforce prior to exiting MVMS. We also gain insight on the different course levels offered at the HS and what the HS looks for in our placements. For the most part, our placement recommendations have held up well - it should be noted that parents/students can choose to waive up or down, and when they do so, those results naturally do not reflect the placements recommended by the Committee.
      - Moving down a level from the recommendation seems to happen more often in Foreign Language
    - The HS noticed more misplacement this year for G9-12 than in previous years, and again, that likely has strong ties to the nature of not having face-to-face access for observing students’ work styles during the pandemic.
    - There is heightened focus on reading comprehension.
      - Reading comprehension is often interpreted as “recall” when in reality it goes much deeper in terms of its intent, connection and application.
      - It is important to understand what you’ve read vs. reading and then immediately trying to do something with it. The steps in between represent understanding the content itself and answer questions about it. Students need to know how to do this.
      - Q: Is there a particular grade at MVMS that dials into teaching how to understand what you’ve read?
        - A: Across the grades in both Language Arts and Social Studies, we work on this. A key tool is non-fiction. Kids love to read fictional books they choose, but non-fiction helps draw attention to the techniques students need to

employ. Students develop stamina and determination to read topics they don't necessarily understand right away.

- The meetings include Mendham Township and Chester.
- 8<sup>th</sup> graders will have the opportunity to meet with their HS counselors in March.
- Q: What is the math transition for MVMS students in the Accelerated Pathway?
  - A: Students will finish G8 in Geometry and move on to Honors Algebra II in HS. They will be in classrooms with sophomores. Often, the 9<sup>th</sup> graders are more motivated to show what they know when mixed with sophomores. We have the students for four years and address the issues we see as they arise.
  - The HS is bringing back the criteria of passing the NJSLA Algebra I test in 8<sup>th</sup> grade before moving on to Geometry in HS. In addition to identifying potential issues prior to arrival to the HS, passing the Algebra I test is a graduation requirement; passing it in G7 accelerated/G8 fulfills that requirement.
- Good news
  - From 5<sup>th</sup> grade perspective, as students have been out and/or virtual, the flow remained fairly seamless and not at all disruptive from the student's perspective. Our experience last year seems to have paid off in terms of how to manage and deliver robust content in a mixed (live/virtual) classroom.

Next meeting Friday, February 11, 2022